

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the following paragraph at page 20, line 24 to read:

Figs. 8 and 9 are diagrams of modifications of the protrusion provided in the groove other than the intersection. The protrusion 30 may be formed in a portion other than the intersection 26 or may have the sloped portions 35 in three or more directions. For example, in a pneumatic tire 1 having the block pattern as the pneumatic tire 1 where the protrusion 30 is formed in a portion with a large space from the intersection 26 to the intersection 26, the sloped portion 35 may be provided in the direction orthogonal to the direction in which the groove 20 is formed, other than the direction in which the groove 20 is formed (Fig. 8). Furthermore, since the sloped portion 35 only has to be provided in two directions at least along the groove 20, the sloped portion 35 may be provided in any direction(s) other than the directions along the groove 20, or may be provided in one direction (Fig. 9). By providing the sloped portion 35 in the direction(s) other than the directions along the groove 20 in the above manner, the stone 50 can be moved more reliably in the direction of the top portion 32, and the protrusion 30 can also be reinforced. Therefore, even if the stone 50 trapped within the groove 20 applies the load to the protrusion 30, the protrusion 30 can be prevented from being crushed, and the distortion of the protrusion 30 due to the load applied by the stone 50 can be minimized. Therefore, the stone 50 can be more reliably ejected to the outside of the groove 20, which allows further minimization of the stone drilling. As the result of this, the resistance to stone drilling can be more definitely improved.

Please amend the following paragraph at page 25, line 25 to read:

Performance evaluation tests conducted on a conventional pneumatic tire 1 and the pneumatic tire 1 according to the present invention are explained below. The performance evaluation test was conducted on two items, the resistance to stone drilling and the snow traction performance.

Please amend the following paragraph at page 28, line 18 to read:

In the above explanation, although the pneumatic tire 1 having the block pattern is explained as an example of the pneumatic tire 1, the pneumatic tire 1 according to the present invention may be any type of those which include the tread area 10 having any pattern other than the block pattern, such as a rib pattern and a rib-lug pattern. Even if the pneumatic tire 1 is other than the pneumatic tire 1 having the block pattern, it should just have the sloped portion 35 formed in two directions at least along the direction in which the groove 20 is formed, in the same manner as that of the pneumatic tire 1 having the block pattern. For example, in the case of the pneumatic tire 1 having the rib pattern, the sloped portion 35 may be formed not only in two directions along the direction in which the groove 20 is formed, but also in the direction orthogonal to the direction in which the groove 20 is formed. If the pneumatic tire 1 has the grooves 20 in which the protrusions 30 can be formed in the above manner, any of the patterns may be used.